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YOUR SOUL—IS IT SAFE ?

A QUESTION FOR EVERY ONE.

YOU HAVE A SOUL.

If an aged stranger should meet you, and earnestly inquire as to the safety of some earthly object you most dearly value: "Man, your property, your character, your family, are they safe?" "Child, your father, your mother, are they safe?" "Mother, your child, is it safe? are you sure of it?" the question would at once arrest your attention, and excite a crowd of hurried and anxious thoughts in your mind. Who is this stranger? what has awakened his manifest earnestness? and why does he address this inquiry to me? He knows what I possess, and what I most dearly value. Does he know of some danger of which I am ignorant? Can he tell me any way of averting or escaping it? Would you not say to him, "What know you of my property, or my character, or my child? What is the danger you intimate; whence does it come; and how can it be removed?"

Dear reader, a stranger addresses you in this little book, and earnestly asks the still more momentous question: "Your soul—is it safe?" He knows that you have a soul, and that that soul is in danger. He can tell whence that peril comes, and how it may be averted, and your soul be safe for ever.

Will you not give one brief hour's attention to him; go with him through these pages, and see if a man who has been reading and thinking about the human soul for forty years may not be able to tell you something of that soul, of its condition, its perils, and its preciousness, that you do not know; or at least, by God's blessing teach you to give to these things a deeper attention than you have ever given?

You have a Soul. It is not your body, not your life, but a *spirit* that is distinct from, and independent of both these. You are not mere matter, however wonderfully organized; you have mind, and consciousness, and will; you can reason and resolve, but mere matter cannot do this. You are not a mere animal, that can see, and feel, and hear; you can understand. You can conceive of things that are purely spiritual, of angels and of God; but only a spiritual nature can have any idea of spiritual objects. A material mirror cannot reflect mind, but only things that have form or color, that are material like itself.

Your soul is independent of your bodily senses, for it often corrects and contradicts their testimony. To the eye the distant hill is but a little mound, and the twinkling star a shining speck; but to the mind one is a vast and lofty eminence, and the other a glorious world.

In the solitude of your chamber, and amidst the silence and darkness of night, when no object meets the eye, no sound falls upon the ear, and no bodily sense is exercised, awake or asleep, there is something in you that can see through the gloom, and range beyond the room that holds your body, can revisit former scenes, recall past associations, and recognize the forms and hear the voices of distant or departed friends. Now, it is not the eye, the ear that does all this; not matter, but mind; not the body, but the soul.

The mind is often happy while the body suffers, often vigorous when the body is weak; and may it not live when the body dies?

All the conscious and intelligent beings of whom we have any knowledge are spirits—devils, and angels, and God. You are a conscious and intelligent being; and should not this lead to the conclusion that you are a spirit too?

David evidently felt this when he said, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit;" and Jesus, when he adopted the words of David; and Stephen, when he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What did these commit to God? Was it the body—the material part? Was it the breath, the last portion of air they inhaled? Oh, no; it was their souls, their conscious and immortal being.

"Abraham gave up the ghost, and was gathered to his fathers;" but how was this? He was not buried with them; their graves were far away in Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and his in Canaan; but his soul departed to the assembly of the blessed, and was gathered to his pious fathers. Paul believed that he was a spirit, distinct and separable from the body, and said, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Yes; and you too have a soul—you are a spirit; your body is but the earthly house, the mortal vestment of your soul. Is that spirit safe?

You have a SOUL, an IMMORTAL SPIRIT; it can never die—never cease to think and feel, to enjoy or suffer. Absolutely and essentially, "God only hath immortality," but he hath conferred immortality on you.

The desire of eternal existence is inherent in man, is prevalent even amidst the ignorance and superstition of heathenism, and God has implanted this desire in the human heart. Did he inspire that wish only to disappoint it? Did he awaken this, the noblest hope of man, for naught? No earthly creature but man looks and longs for immortal existence, and if he is not immortal, his loftier conceptions and aspirations are but capacities of deeper wretchedness—the twofold misery, that he has a conscious existence, and that he is destined to lose it for ever. But it is not, it cannot be so.

The moral nature of man involves the necessity of his future existence. God must have had some wise and holy purpose in the creation of such a being as you are—must have had a definite will concerning your character and conduct; and that purpose and that will are revealed to you in his holy word. Your attention and obe-

dience to that word, or your neglect and violation of it, must be followed by reward or punishment. Were it not for the expectation of a future state, there would be no moral government. Every form of self-indulgence and sin would be fearlessly perpetrated, and all order and happiness would disappear from this world, if there were no expectation of a world to come.

The character of God indicates and insures the immortality of your soul. Wise and kind and just as he is, sin must be disobedience to his will, and dishonoring to his government. Yet the good and bad are, as to this world, equally favored and afflicted. Virtue averts no earthly calamity, and vice insures no present punishment.

Can this be the end of the one, or of the other? It is impossible —impossible to the character of God. There must be a future world —a time and place of reckoning and recompense. Yes, dear reader, your soul is immortal. Your body may decay and die; all its wonderful structure be disorganized, and all its fine and vivid sensibilities be lost; the eyes no longer see, nor the ears hear, nor the nerves feel, nor the heart pulsate. Impassive and insensible as the clods that cover it, it will not feel the pressure of the foot that treads upon its lowly bed, nor the touch of the spade that turns up the mouldering dust; but your soul will yet be conscious, its perceptions more clear, and its sensibilities more vivid than when in this earthly dwelling; it will live in bliss or woe, in heaven or hell for ever. That soul is *you* —your nobler self. Is your soul safe?

You have a SOUL, a PRECIOUS SOUL. Precious in its own nature, and of great and glorious capacities; it can think and know and will, and desire and enjoy. To man in a savage state, bodily vigor and brutal courage are the noblest qualities, though in these he is equalled or surpassed by some of the beasts around him; but to civilized and educated man, intelligence, knowledge, is a far nobler attribute of humanity; and the objects of his knowledge are the tests of its real dignity. What then can be so ennobling as the knowledge of God? and your soul is capable of knowing God.

It is precious in its very immortality. This endows it with a kind of infinitude, and impresses upon it and incalculable worth: it will continue for ever. Even temporal things are valued by their duration: a cottage in perpetuity is worth more than a palace for an hour; a life of ordinary enjoyment is better than a moment of ecstacy; what then is the value of an immortal consciousness, a power to think and learn, to acquire and enjoy for ever? This is the capacity of your soul, and this capacity gives to it inconceivable importance and preciousness. You may learn the worth of your soul by considering how it is estimated by wiser and holier beings than yourself.

Such how highly God values it. So precious was the soul, yea, your soul, to him, that its interests occupied his thoughts in the past eternity, and he foresaw its ruin and provided for its redemption. As soon as sin had blighted the soul of man, he commanded the sacrificial altar to be raised, and the bleeding victim offered, as the hopeful shadow of the great Sacrifice to come; and as priest after priest ministered at that altar, and prophet after prophet unfolded the plan of salvation, all proved and illustrated God's high appreciation of the

value of the soul, and showed that its salvation was at once the warmest desire of his gracious heart, and the grand object of his eternal providence.

See how Christ values the human soul. He said, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And his entire history proves that to him souls were far more precious than wealth, or ease, or honor, or life, or worlds.

"The redemption of the soul is precious." Who is able "to redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him?" Only Christ; and "He gave himself for us;" "laid down his life." Nothing else was of sufficient value. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

See how angels value the soul. Ever the friends of man, they rejoiced in his creation, witnessed his fall, watched the history of his redemption. They estimate the worth of souls by their own experience of how much holy spirits can enjoy, and by their observation of what fallen spirits can suffer. The salvation of a soul is, to them, a fact of tremendous importance. They watch for the first tear of penitence, the first cry for pardoning grace; it touches all their hearts, and is told through all their glorious legions; and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"—joy, loftier bliss, and louder songs in heaven. And why? Is it that some new system of worlds is created; or some other order of intelligent beings called into existence; or some mighty enemy of God and good subdued and punished? No; but that a fallen man is created anew; that the good Shepherd has brought back a wandering sheep; that a prodigal son has returned to his eternal Father; that one precious soul is saved from the wrath to come.

And you have a soul. Your body—those hands and feet and eyes, that heart and head, are *yours;* but they are not *you.* You move those limbs, hear through those ears, and see through those eyes; but your soul asserts its superiority to them all. That soul can range where those feet have never trod—can perceive what those eyes have not seen, nor those ears heard—can apprehend and hope for future and eternal joy, when your "earthly house of this tabernacle" is mouldered into dust. You are a spirit, an embodied spirit, yet a spirit immaterial, immortal, and precious beyond all human calculation.

Have you rightly appreciated and cared for the welfare of your soul? What portion of your attention, what part of every day have you given to its interests? What efforts have you employed, what prayers have you offered for its salvation? But why do I ask this? Does that soul need your care? Is it exposed to evil? Can, its eternal happiness be in danger? Oh, yes; the evils and enemies that threaten it are many and mighty; and the ruin they threaten is irretrievable and everlasting.

YOUR SOUL IS EXPOSED TO DANGER.

Danger to our earthly interests in varied according to the source from whence it arises, and the objects it assails.

Is it our character it threatens? This may be injured by misunderstanding or misrepresentation on the part of others, or by misconduct on our own part. Is it our property that is endangered? This may be lost through improvidence in us, or through failure or dishonesty in those with whom we have to do. Is it life that is in peril? This may be destroyed by internal disease, or outward violence, or by the inflictions of offended justice; and this last idea, the dangers of life, we will employ as an illustration of the perils which threaten the immortal soul; only premising that the death of the soul is not the extinction of its being, but the loss of its happiness.

Your soul is depraved, is sinful; and sin is the disease of the soul. Sin impairs the vigor of the soul, disturbs its healthful action, and disorganizes its vital powers; and if its influence be not arrested by some sovereign remedy, its effect will be daily aggravated, and ultimately fatal. The healthful condition of the soul is love to God, devotedness to his service, and dependence on his blessing. But where on earth is the soul in this condition now? Look around on the masses of mankind, and see the proofs of a universal depravity. It pervades all ranks of human society, from the highest to the lowest; it spreads itself over our common nature; and in the strong and startling words of eternal truth, "The whole he d is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it."

Look within, on your own spiritual condition, and say, do you love God, and serve him as he requires, as you were intended to do, as an intelligent and favored creature should? No; you are conscious that you do not. But how is this? your soul is fallen, depraved, diseased; and that spiritual malady is ever increasing, enfeebling your better purposes, defiling your heart, and displaying its stronger symptoms in your life: that disease will at length be fatal; and unless it is arrested by the healing grace of God, it must issue in eternal death. Were your body under the action of some dangerous affliction, you would seek the aid of the highest skill, and submit to most nauseous medicines. Have you so readily and anxiously sought for your diseased soul "the balm that is in Gilead, and the Physician there?"

Your soul is exposed to external danger. Though no disease should enfeeble the powers, and threaten the destruction of your natural life, yet it might be imperilled by external evils. What avails the joyo s health of the hardy seaman when the sunken rock, or the boisterous wind, or the towering wave, sinks his vessel and himself in the mighty deep? And what the strong arm and courageous heart of the brave soldier, when the gleaming sword or the whistling bullet strikes him down in death? Nay, what the vigorous tread, and the happy anticipations of the homeward traveller, when the robber's weapon pierces to his heart?

Would you be *safe* if exposed to the posion of a tainted atmosphere, or the contagion of a deadly pestilence? Yet such is the dangerous

influence of the worldly and wicked habits and examples that surround you on every hand—the all but universal neglect of religion and God, blighting all holy feeling and heavenward thought and noble purpose The very commonness of irreligion is its greatest power for evil; it appears like the assumption of singular wisdom, or the abandonment of Christian charity, to deny the piety and safety of the majority of mankind, though God has said, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil."

Would you be *safe* travelling through an unknown country, amid many devious ways, all but one of which were deeply perilous? Would conflicting testimonies as to the one safe way allay your anxiety? Would it not augment your danger if the false ways were ever the fairest and the most frequented?

Well, such are the perplexities and the perils of the journey of life; "for strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it"—yea, none, without the chart of truth and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Would you be *safe* in the battle-field? Would you think yourself safe, even if your heart were brave, and your arm were strong? This world is a battle-field, in which we must contend, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." True, your enemies are invisible; but is that a reason for indifference and imaginary security? Does the soldier, if warned of the approach of a powerful foe, feel secure because he sees not the hosts that threaten him? Does he not dread the covert enemy far more than the open assault and the expected battle?

Your spiritual enemy is as crafty as he is cruel. He will endeavor to make you doubt his approach; yea, his very existence. He forbears to alarm, that he may the more readily destroy. Does the assassin tell his intended victim where he will hide himself, or when he will deal the fatal blow? Do the ambushed warriors warn those they would destroy of the place of their concealment, or the force with which the onslaught will be made? No; nor does the enemy of souls.

He knows that a mistaken sense of security in you is the most certain ground of triumph to himself; and hence he veils the malice of his purpose, speaks to you in accents soft as those of an angel of light, and tells you that there is no danger to your soul, no need of anxiety and endeavor for its salvation.

Are you fearful that your heart and life are not such as God can approve? He will present every form of ungodliness in a fairer light; and persuade you that earthly mindedness is but commendable care for your interest; sensuality, but innocent enjoyment; and actual sin but the necessary consequence of the infirmity of human nature.

Are you young? He will assure you that death and eternity are far away from you; that solemn thought is inappropriate to the youthful mind; and immediate preparation for another world unnecessary to one who has a long life before him in this world.

Are you aged, and yet unrenewed? He will suggest that your life has not been so guilty as to deserve condemnation; and if you will not believe this, he will sternly say that your day of grace is gone by, and it is unwise and useless to cloud the few enjoyments of your

age with gloomy forebodings of a doom that it is too late to alter, whatever it may be.

Such is your spiritual enemy, and such are "the wiles of the devil," "Apollyon the destroyer!"

Read the testimonies of Scripture as to the machinations he has employed, the sins he has occasioned, and the souls he has ruined; hear the frequent and solemn admonitions of God to "beware" of him to "watch" against him, to "resist" him; and you will feel the truth that, not only from inward depravity, but also from external evils, your soul is exposed to danger.

Your soul is under the condemnation of God. Though no disease within, no foes without, should endanger our natural life, that life may be forfeited by crime, and righteously sacrificed by offended justice. The unhappy prisoner in yonder cell is in perfect health, and no hand of unlawful violence is armed against him; yet his hours are numbered, and to-morrow he must die. Do not think that the reference is insulting or inapplicable; however humiliating, it is just and appropriate. There is a higher authority than human governments, and there are laws more imperative and unchanging than the laws of man. "There is a God that judgeth in the earth." His "law is holy and his commandment holy, just, and good;" and you have offended that God, you have violated that law, and are exposed to its tremendous penalty. Guilt is the universal character of our fallen race; "all have sinned," "the whole world is become guilty before God," "and judgement is come upon all men to condemnation." You, my dear reader, are a criminal under sentence of death—the death of the soul.

It may be you have not seriously thought of this, though you have often said to God," We have done the things we ought not to have done;" or, it may be, you have felt your guilt, and said, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord;" but in either case the fact is the same: you are a sinner, and as a sinner, you are righteously condemned.

The doomed criminal may sleep in peace through the last hours of life—may dream of joys gone by, or joys to come; but justice is ever vigilant, and the instruments of death are ready: he will awake but to die. So the sinner may slumber in imaginary security, and bright visions of life and pleasure may delight his heart, but his "damnation slumbereth not;" he will "awake to everlasting shame," will "die in his sins," and "lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment."

Is not all this true? Is it not written in the book of truth? Are not you a fallen creature, depraved, spiritually diseased? Do not evil influences surround and threaten you? Is there not guilt on your conscience? *Then is your soul safe?* Oh no, nor can it ever be, unless some gracious power shall subdue your depravity, shield you from the malice of your spiritual enemies, and save you from the righteous condemnation of God. All this may be done for you; God is able and willing to do it; and, all this being done, your soul would be safe for ever.

Did you ever seriously reflect on these things; ever make the value and danger and possible salvation of your soul the subject of deliberate

and deep, and solemn examination and inquiry; ever determine to ascertain what reason you had to hope for future happiness? If not, you have neglected the first and most momentous duty of life.

Thought, deep, earnest thought, on the state and prospects of your soul is the first step in rational religion. There are myriads now living in sin whom one hour of solemn inquiry and fervent prayer might, humanly speaking, have brought to God; yea, myriads in hell, whom one hour of such ho y exercises might have led to heaven.

Do we, in saying this, seem to you to undervalue or forget the necessity of divine influence to change the heart? Then you mistake the means by which the Holy Spirit operates, and the way in which his gracious power must be sought. It is in such moments of solemn reflection that divine influence is imparted and on such anxiously inquiring souls that the blessed Spirit descends. This happy relation between reflection and return to God, and the reception of his blessing, is beautifully illustrated in the parable of the prodigal. "And when he came to himself, he said, I will arise, and go to my father; and when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Oh yes, God marks the hour of solemn reflection, helps the purpose of returning to himself, and hastens to meet and bless the coming soul. It is true, then, that one hour of solemn thought may save a soul. Try for yourself the blessed experiment. Give an hour, and give it now, to self examination and earnest prayer. God will meet, and help, and bless you; and the result may be the salvation of your soul.

YOUR SOUL MAY BE SAVED.

To warn a person of an unavoidable danger, or an inevitable calamity, would be not merely useless, but positively cruel.

Who would tell the happy child of the weaknesses and pains of those diseases that are incident to its early life? Who would wish that the playful lamb could foresee the slaughtering knife? Nay, who would awaken the sleeping criminal, only to point out to him the horrors of that ignominious death to which the morning's dawn will light him?

Do you ask, "Then why do you tell the sinner of his depravity and danger and fearful condemnation?" I answer, "Because that depravity may be subdued, that danger may be averted, and that sentence of condemnation may be cancelled; yea, exchanged for one of pardon and blessing."

Yes, my dear reader, your soul may be saved. Do you ask, "Whereby shall I know this?" The Bible ever contemplates man as a sinner, and addresses him only as a sinner; it is to him "the word of salvation." All its revelations are the unfoldings of the work of human redemption; all its invitations say, "Look unto me, and be saved;" all its precepts, "Work out your own salvation;" and all its promises, "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."

Divine mercy has provided a salvation that meets all the necessities of our lost condition; and the gospel clearly reveals and freely offers that salvation to all men. The great work is accomplished, the eternal blessings are prepared; and the gracious invitation is uttered, "Come, for all things are now ready." What does fallen man require; depraved, endangered, and condemned as he is? There must be pardon for his guilt, santification for his impurity, safeguard from his enemies here, and a home of rest and joy and glory hereafter; and all these God has provided for you.

The atonement of Christ insures forgiveness to every one who believes in Him. Forgiveness is the great want of the condemned criminal. What to him are the cheerful light and the vital air; the flowering spring and the fruitful summer; the glow of health and the words of sympathy? He must have mercy and pardon, or the shadow of death rests like a dark cloud on all that is bright and beautiful around him.

So it is with the condemned sinner. Nothing but divine forgiveness can help or cheer him now, The awful sentence is written in that holy book; is whispered by the voice of conscience; is read in mystic characters upon his chamber wall, "Oh, wicked man, thou shalt surely die;" and nothing but pardoning mercy can meet his case. That mercy is presented to him in Christ. He "came into the world to save sinners;" "gave himself for us;" and there is "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." He stood in our stead; "suffered and died for us;" honored, by his perfect obedience, the law we had broken; and averted the curse we had merited by enduring it on our behalf.

Now, God can "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth;" and a full and free forgiveness is offered to every sinner who trusts in Christ. His sins are "blotted out," he "is justified from all things," he has "peace with God," and "there is, therefore, now no condemnation."

The uniform and definite language of the gospel is, "Believe, and be saved:" for "whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life." Trust in Christ then, and your soul will be safe—safe, from the judicial consequences of sin, the wrath and curse of God, and condemnation to eternal woes. Oh, reader, think on your guilty and doomed condition; and receive and rejoice in this great and blessed truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"Here, sinners, you may heal your wounds,
And wipe your sorrows dry;
Trust in the mighty Saviour's name,
And you shall never die."

Yes, your soul may be saved!

The Holy Spirit will sanctify your nature, if you humbly ask his influence. Pardon is not enough for the happiness of the diseased criminal; he wants health to enjoy the blessing of freedom. Rescued from condemnation and released from the fetters of his prison-house, if disease still prey upon his vitals, the life that mercy has granted to him is but "a time to die!" Nor is divine forgiveness alone sufficient for the happiness of degenerate man; he needs purity of heart. Pardon may rescue him from the anger, and restore him to the favor of God; but it alone bestows no capacity for the enjoyment of that favor. The merit of Jesus redeems the believing sinner from hell; but the renewing and sanctifying power of the blessed Spirit must prepare him for heaven. Now, this gracious influence is offered every believing soul in answer to prayer.

Ah, what riches of mercy are here! God will repair the moral ruin which we have wrought in our hearts; will restore the purity which our sins have destroyed; re-draw on our souls his own lovely image, which we had obliterated; raise our groveling affections again to himself and heaven, and make us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Hear his gracious promises: "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

"Will he do all this for me?" you ask; Yes, for you, and for every praying soul.

How tenderly does Jesus meet and obviate the poor sinner's natural and painful doubt. Fathers, who have felt paternal tenderness; and children, who have known a father's love, listen to the words of your Redeemer: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Do you ask how the Holy Spirit acts upon the mind, to enlighten and purify and comfort it? Jesus answers you, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it co eth, and whither it goeth: even so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

That divine power can renew and sanctify the mind is a truth not hard to believe, though the mode of its operation may be impossible to comprehend. God formed that mind—formed it in "the beauty of holiness;" and surely he can form it anew, and restore it to its primitive condition. That the Holy Spirit has done this, is proved by innumerable examples; the Bible is full of the memorials of his renovating power. All the knowledge and purity and virtue that adorned the characters of patriarchs and prophets and apostles and Christians, whose histories are written in the word of God, were the results of this divine and mighty influence; and all the excellences that distinguish living believers from their fellow-sinners, and from their former selves, are the fruits of the same gracious power. That gracious power can give life and health and holiness to your soul; can impart to you that real inward piety which is the earnest and the beginning of life eternal. Yes, your soul may be saved, not only from the fearful curse, but from the fatal power of sin; may not only be pardoned but purified; not only entitled to heaven through faith in the righteousness of Jesus, but prepared for heaven by "the power of the Holy Ghost;" and you may say, with the gratitude and joy of the apostle, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Yes, your soul may be saved, only pray.

"Renew mine eyes, and form my ears
And mould my heart afresh;
Give me new passions, joys, and fears,
And turn the stone to flesh."

The power of God will shield you from all your spiritual foes. Let the condemned criminal be forgiven; let him go forth, in liberty, in perfect health yet, if he have to breathe the pestilential air of some sickly land, infested by ferocious beasts, and inhabited by powerful and merciless enemies, his life is still in danger. So would it be with the pardoned and renewed soul, if it were not "kept by the power of God." It is kept, and ever shall be; and herein is its safety.

Do you say, "But cannot I keep myself? I am free to will and to act." Alas, dear reader, you are not so free; for "the world, the flesh, and the devil," are in league against you. You are influenced by the opinions and habits of those around you; you are "subject to divers lusts and passions;" and without the help of God, you will be "led captive by the devil at his will." You have lost your spiritual liberty and your moral power by sin; and you cannot keep yourself from the dangers that threaten you.

Do you ask, "If I am pardoned and renewed, am I not able to ward off the attacks of my spiritual foes?" No; not by your own strength, even then. Hear the acknowledgments of the apostle: "We are not sufficient of ourselves to do any thing as of ourselves;

our sufficiency is of God ;" "When I would do good, evil is present with me—how to perform that which is good, I find not." I find "a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." It is through too much dependence upon themselves, and too little on the grace of God, that so many professors, and even Christians, fall into sin. The self-dependent are ever in danger ; and the soul that humbly and steadfastly trusts in God is always safe; hence the singular and paradoxical saying of Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Your spiritual enemy is too cunning and too mighty for you. He is an angel, though a fallen one ; and still he has an angel's intelligence, and an angel's power. He has studied the human heart for nearly six thousand years, and intimately knows all its diversities of depravity, the avenues by which it may most readily be assaulted, and the means and motives that will most easily seduce it from religion and God ; and if you do not simply and constantly depend on "power from on high," he will accomplish your ruin. But the gospel tells you of unsleeping eyes that will watch over you, of everlasting arms that will encircle you, and of almighty power that will shield you from harm. It assures you that "they that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever." Yes, your soul may be safe ; but this cannot be, unless you believe in Jesus, and simply and heartily rely on the merit of his sacrifice. It cannot be, unless you seek, in earnest prayer, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and yield your heart to his transforming power. It cannot be, unless you renounce all self-dependence, and rest alone on the safe keeping of God. Then your safety will be inviolable ; it will be guaranteed by all the infinite perfections of Jehovah ; by his unchanging love, his almighty power, and his eternal truth ; and you may sing—

"Firm as the earth thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust ;
If I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.

YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOUR SOUL IS SAFE.

If I could tell you of some certain way of insuring the safety of the earthly things that are dearest to you, your personal comforts, your property, your beloved relatives—if I could unfold some infallible method of averting disease and death from you and yours, with what attention would you listen to the disclosure of the happy plan, with what eagerness would you adopt it, and with what ecstasy rejoice in the confidence that the dear objects of your greatest care were secure from every harm. Will you be so earnestly attentive—will you so eagerly adopt the prescribed means, and so deeply rejoice in the hope of security, while I tell you how you may be assured that your precious soul is safe, and safe for ever? Yes, secure from the condemnation of God, from the deadly power of sin, from the malice of its spiritual foes, and from the dreadful miseries of hell.

You may suppose your soul is already safe, but that supposition is no certain evidence of its security. It may be, that your confidence is more the result of indifference than of enlightened and earnest inquiry, the mere delusion of a spiritual slumber, in which the threatened danger is not seen, nor the gracious warning heard; and dreaming of security and happines, you may cry, "Peace, peace, when sudden destruction cometh upon you, and you cannot escape."

Or the confidence may be the result of ignorance of the character of God, and the guiltiness of sin, and the way of salvation through Christ; ignorance of that awful justice that "will by no means clear the guilty;" of that righteous condemnation which has "passed upon all men, because all have sinned;" and of the nature of that faith by which alone the sinner can obtain pardon and salvation in the work of the Redeemer.

You may think your soul secure while it is in eternal peril, unless, saying, "Thy testimonies are my counsellors," you carefully inquire and examine and ascertain what is the appointed and only ground of safety, and how that "Rock of ages" can be reached and relied upon.

Do not think that confidence of security is necessarily a state of salvation. Beware of delusion here; for,

> "He that never doubted of his state,
> He may, perhaps—perhaps he may too late."

Oh, beware of delusion here; remember it is your soul that is at stake—it is its happiness for ever: and there are false hopes—there are "refuges of lies," and you may go, the victim of delusion, to the very gate of heaven; for Christ has said, "Then shall ye begin to say. We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are."

Do not understand me to mean, on the other hand, that an assurance of safety is essential to the salvation of your soul. No; the trembling child is as safe, in the impregnable citadel, as the mightiest hero, though it cannot understand the strength of the bulwarks which shelter it. The shipwrecked mariner is safe when he reaches the land, though the darkness prevents his recognizing his native shore

and the humble soul that trusts in Jesus is secure, though he may doubt whether he is really in the "hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest." It is the actual position of the sinner's soul, and not his perception of that position that constitutes its safety; the reality of its humble trasting faith, and and not the rejoicing of it; the firmness of the rock, and not the full assurance of the hope that rests upon it, which insures salvation.

Yet, to know that I am safe, is necessary to my present happiness, though it is not so to my eternal bliss. Then how may we know that our souls are safe?

In this inquiry we must utterly discard all human opinions, all the deductions and decisions of mere reason, as to what may be or ought to be enough for the safety of a soul. We must argue only from the revealed character and will of the great Lawgiver; for at his bar the final decison will be given, and he will decide according to his own law, and not according to the judgment of his creatures. All our knowledge in this matter must be gathered from the assurances and illustrations and examples of his holy word.

Let us ponder that blessed book together then; and if I cannot lead you into those higher regions of holy peace where shines the "full assurance of hope," I may, by the help of God, bring you to that humbler point, where you will have, and feel that you have *a right to hope.*

That blessed word tells us that, by Christ, "all that believe are justified from all things;" that "there is therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Have you felt your sinfulness, your lost condition as a sinner, and "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you?" Is it the sincere and solemn utterance of your heart, "Lord, save me, or I perish?"

> "Other refuge have I none,
> Hangs my helpless soul on thee?"

Then believe and rejoice in the assurance of God, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" and in the promise of Jesus, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

Your soul safe!

Have you experienced a change of mind? Is your mind enlightened to perceive the paramount importance of spiritual and eternal things? Can you say' "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see?" Has your heart been renewed, and its affections and desires directed to God and Christ and heaven? Then you may recognize this as the work of God in your soul, and rejoice in his blessed truths.

Are you now humbly depending on the help of God to strengthen you to do his holy will, and to shield you from the power of your spiritual enemies? Is the habitual feeling of your heart dependence, and its daily prayer, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe?" Then you are "kept by the power of God;" "underneath thee are the everlasting arms;" and you may rejoice in that eternal safe- keeping, and

say, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Oh yes, relying on the atonement of Jesus, renewed by his Spirit, and confiding in his care, your soul is safe

And now, dear reader, *is* YOUR *soul safe?* Do not slight this momentous question; do not shrink from it; do not hastily decide it. Remember, the alternatives are your eternal happiness or misery, heaven or hell. Let me affectionately entreat you to give one hour to anxious thought and earnest prayer.

Think—it is my soul, myself, my immortal nature. Think, again, of the perils to which that soul is exposed by sin, of the merciful provision God has made for its salvation, and of the scriptural evidences necessary to prove its security. Pray that the Holy Spirit would direct your inquiries and "lead you into all truth," lest you should be deluded through indifference, or ignorance, or presumption. Remember that the real condition of your soul is known to God, without any doubt or peradventure, and earnestly ask him to make it known unto you. If you are really in danger of condemnation and perdition, forgetfulness or ignorance will not lessen your peril, nor for one moment retard your eternal ruin; and if you are in a state of safety, it would be happy for you to know that you are so. Then give one hour to solemn inquiry and earnest prayer.

You are perhaps a professor of religion, and associated with the disciples of Christ; but "all are not Israel that are of Israel;" and I would still say to you, Is your soul safe? are you sure of it? "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

You have perhaps neglected religion, ensnared by the pleasures, or engrossed by the cares of the present world. You do not know, you have not inquired the state of your soul.

Then think—I have a soul; I am a spirit, an immortal spirit; and though the indulgences of life may please my animal nature, they are nothing to my nobler being. I am an undying mind, and though the knowledge of the things around me may delight and exalt my intellectual nature, they are only of brief existence. I want the knowledge of things enduring as myself, of heaven, and Christ, and God. I am a spirit, a deathless spirit; and though the possession of the things of time may enrich me now, I should aspire to "durable riches"—"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away"—to heaven as my final home, and to God as my eternal portion. These thoughts are new to you, it may be, or have only occupied your mind for a few of your more serious moments; then how can you expect to know that your soul is safe?

Perhaps you are seriously saying, "Oh that I had this happy confidence; and how may I hope to obtain it?" How have you sought it? It is not the reward of indolence, or of occasional and heartless endeavor. You must diligently use the appointed means of grace; must read and study the holy word with attention, humility, and prayer. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of ME." There alone you

can learn the requirements of his holy will, the provisions of his mercy, and the spirit and character of his true disciples.

You must attend the ordinances of divine appointment, not occasionally, but constantly ; not for half the Sabbath, but during all its hallowed hours. You are contented or compelled to give the whole of six days to your worldly interests ; you must give at least the seventh with equal diligence to your spiritual welfare, nor act nor feel as if temporal things were more necessary or more precious than eternal things. You must "pray without ceasing ;" be frequent and earnest and importunate in supplication to God ; must ask for light and purity and hope, as the hungry ask for food, the suffering for ease, or the dying for continued life. You must make religion the business of your life, your daily life. No business is so important ; none will so certainly succeed, nor yield such rich returns.

There is holy wisdom—that which maketh "wise unto salvation :" and "if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." There is a teaching Spirit, one that "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God ;" and if you seek and ask his instructions, "he will lead you into all truth," will "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto you." There are evidences, definite and infallible evidences of ersonal piety ; and if you study and understand and culivate them, you may know that you "have passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation."

Yes, there is yet a Pisgah in the wilderness ; and though the ascent to it be steep and tiresome, the devoted and determined soul may reach its top, and see the far-off glories of the heavenly Canaan. You may know that your soul is safe.

Dear reader, look again through these simple pages, and listen to their cautions and instructions and exhortations, as to the voice of a kind and faithful friend, one who has prayed, and will yet pray that the perusal of this little book may, by the blessing of Almighty God, lead you to care for the eternal welfare of your precious soul, to seek and find in Christ its present and everlasting salvation, and to KNOW THAT YOUR SOUL IS SAFE.

Hollinger Corp.
pH 8.5